

PRESENTATION OF MITCHELL FIELD DRAFT MASTER PLAN
Report from the Harpswell Public Forum, August 21, 2007

Overview of Meeting

On August 21, 2007, the Mitchell Field Draft Master Plan was presented to citizens of the Town of Harpswell at West Harpswell School from 6:30 – 8:30 PM. Approximately fifty (50) citizens attended the forum. It began with an introduction from Mitchell Field Steering Committee chair, Judith Redwine. Alan Holt, an architect and town planner from Holt & Lachman Architects + Planners in Portland, showed a Powerpoint presentation of the draft Master Plan for Mitchell Field, which included a helicopter fly-through of the potential site plan.

The Mitchell Field Draft Master Plan includes a relocated entry road, parking near Rt. 123 for a recreational trail, a perimeter trail, mown paths, a trail system, parking for vehicles and boat trailers, a public beach area with a kayak carry-in, mown and maintained lawns, undeveloped woods for passive recreation, cluster mixed-income housing located near Rt. 123, a public boat launch facility, pier upgrades, and a marine industrial zone.

After the presentation, attendees at this forum were encouraged to ask questions about the draft master plan, and share comments and concerns. Consultant Alan Holt, marine engineer Barney Baker, Town Planner Jay Chace, and members of the Mitchell Field Committee were on hand to answer questions. All questions, comments, and responses were transcribed and are as follows:

Questions and Comments

Question: How would we continue to accommodate the Harpswell Festival, Bean Suppers, etc (in terms of parking, etc)?

Answer: Plan still retains open meadow, lawn areas.

Questions: Location of lawn vs. meadow? Did we account for state standards with common septic site vs. cluster housing proposed?

Answer: The location of lawn and meadow areas is not set in stone, this is just a conceptual proposal. Mitchell Field will be studied, and if it makes more sense to mow other areas, that will be done. The state standards will be considered for the final design.

Comment: Glad to see affordable housing!

Comment: I am concerned about mowing the fields with all the birds that nest there.

Response: The mowing schedule will take this into account.

Comment: I thought there was a water use restriction for the site.

Response: The Maine DEP is eliminating the restriction.

Question: What about the current two houses on the site?

Answer: They need a great deal of work. This plan would remove them to allow room for more houses in the plan design.

Question: Would there be a paved pedestrian path along the existing main road?

Answer: This was not specifically addressed in the master plan, as people who participated in the forums and community design workshop were more concerned with the perimeter roads being vehicle free.

Question: Will there be benches along the paths?

Answer: This has been addressed before and included in Recreation Dept. projects.

Comment: Congrats to the Mitchell Field Committee on the whole process, including the helicopter ride.

Question: Does parking lot B have connectivity to the trails?

Answer: There is room to connect the path.

Comment: The buffer for Washburn & Doughty isn't apparent in the plan.

Response: This is included in site plan standards.

Question: Trucks on main road? Washburn and Doughty briefs said 20 ton trucks once a week and somewhat smaller trucks on a more frequent basis.

Answer: Road is well-built to handle trucks.

Comment: The boat launch turnaround looks small.

Response: Need to look more closely – town boat ramp.

Comment: Boat launch will draw boaters from other places.

Comment: Take down the outer pier.

Comment: Residential area, industrial area means whole site open to the public.

Response: Could gate below housing access.

Question: What impact does changing the road south of the fire station have on fire station response?

Answer: We do not know at this point, but there will be a traffic study during the site plan review.

Question: What is the difference between a mowed lawn path and a lawn?

Answer: A lawn is mowed regularly and takes up a much larger space.

Question: Would it be possible to move the two houses currently on site instead of destroying them?

Answer: Developer burden to build new houses, move or destroy.

Question: Was the idea of a bandstand or performance area lost in the shuffle?

Answer: This was reflected in some of the plans from the community design workshop, so it is definitely a possibility for the site.

Question: What size boats can the boat launch handle? It should be able to take larger boats.

Answer: Yes, it could. Not at mean low tide, but at most periods it could accommodate larger boats.

Comment: Plan should build community. CPIC planning meetings, high number of permits over next few years, mostly on the Neck. Marine Industry doesn't support that goal.

Response: Washburn and Doughty will be a separate town vote. This is a master plan for the whole site.

Comment: Congrats to Committee for all their efforts. Amazing piece of property.

Question: Is Mitchell Field going to be part of "Village" designation?

Answer: It is currently zoned as Village, CPIC is looking at criteria again, so it is possible that it could change.

Question: Design calling for 4 acres of boat-building operation, but W & D requested 5 acres, didn't they?

Answer: We were not able to discuss our plans with W & D, and so could not ask them about their needs, but did research similar facilities to determine an estimated size.

Question: Are there walking areas with safe access/usage and areas to sit and rest?

Answer: The perimeter road will still be available for walking.

Question: Is tractor trailer traffic compatible with rural community usage?

Answer: Washburn and Doughty negotiations are inclusive of Mitchell Field planning process.

Question: Restricting use? Consider non-resident taxpayers.

Answer: Included in current MF policy.

Comment: Impressive presentation.

Question: Concrete pad with steel structure gone?

Answer: It is part of the Marine Industrial area of the site.

Comment: Affordable housing is necessary to encourage families with children to live in town.

Question: How big is industrial building?

Answer: Footprint is approximately 1 acre. It will be approx. 25 feet above ground.

Question: Will public boat launch facility include commercial fishing usage? Will it be integrated with beach use?

Answer: The boat launch can be used by lobstermen as well as recreational use.

Development is to the north, beach is to the south.

Question: If wind turbines are a possibility on the site, where would they go?

Answer: Monitoring is necessary to decide if it is possible and more than likely it would not be a problem on site.